

Downtown Newton

Streetscape Master Plan

April 2010



*Design Graphic Courtesy of
Miceli, Kulik, Williams and Associates & Central Avenue
Special Improvement District - Jersey City, New Jersey*

Downtown Newton
Streetscape Master Plan
Newton, NC April 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The City of Newton Planning and Economic Development Department facilitated this streetscape master plan for the Master Plan Committee. The Planning Department staff would like to thank all the participants in the streetscape master planning process from the earlier 2003-2004 Master Plan Committee as well as the current Master Plan Committee. Committee members from both time periods attended many walking reviews of Newton's streets and participated in the sometimes long planning and discussion sessions. The Planning Staff would particularly like to thank the Downtown Newton Development Association Design Committee and Chairperson Anne Stedman for taking on this challenge and investing the time and thought to make this study possible at no cost to the citizens of Newton.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Master Plan Charter

During 2002, City Staff noticed that two groups were separately working on improvements to the appearance of the downtown area. City Staff suggested a collaborative meeting, and on August 13, 2002, the Downtown Newton Development Association and the Newton Appearance Commission met to form a subcommittee to develop a Master Plan for downtown improvements. On September 18, 2002, this subcommittee made a presentation to City Council which included a Mission Statement and a vision of improvements to sidewalks, alleys, parking areas, pedestrian crossings, street lighting with underground utilities, street trees, planters, and other streetscape elements. City Council endorsed the efforts of this subcommittee and directed them to proceed to work on the Master Plan with the guidance of City Staff, with the understanding that no consultants were to be used and that the involvement of City Staff might be preempted by other priorities.

Work on the Master Plan continued until late in 2004, when the work load of City Staff made it necessary to break away from the Master Plan project. The Master Plan subcommittee was idled until February of 2008, when a “Community Vision Forum” for the City of Newton was conducted by the DNDA. During the Vision Forum, many Newton citizens expressed a concern about the appearance of downtown and the need for completing the Master Plan. The Newton City Council subsequently established the completion of the Streetscape Master Plan as a goal during their 2008 planning session. In December of 2008, the DNDA Design Committee decided that the completion of the Master Plan should be the Committee’s top priority for 2009, and City Staff and the DNDA Board re-established the Master Plan Committee. The new committee included members of the DNDA Design Committee, Newton City staff members, and Vision Forum participants. Work on the Master Plan continued through the year of 2009, culminating in this Master Plan Report dated April 2010.

Mission and Goals

The initial Mission Statement, proposed in 2002 by the first Master Plan Committee, included these words – *“to develop standards for making improvements to and maintaining City utilities, landscape areas, sidewalks, streets, and street lighting. These standards will be an integral part of a Master Plan dealing with an eight –block area in the Central Business District in downtown Newton.”* Since the original mission was defined, the planning area has been expanded to cover recommendations for all twenty blocks in the Central Business District.

The Master Plan Committee and the Downtown Newton Development Association want to make the downtown Newton area an exciting and inviting experience for both citizens and visitors. It is recognized that a safe, clean, and interesting environment is good for the welfare of the citizens and promotes further investment in the area. Citizens who participated in the 2008 Vision Forum spoke of a desire for a variety of downtown

amenities, shops, artisans, and pedestrian features that would create a thriving community center. The Master Plan Committee presents this Streetscape Master Plan as a guiding document for planning and implementing cohesive improvements to the sidewalks, streets, lighting, and public furnishings of downtown Newton. This Master Plan is developed for use by the City of Newton's Appearance Commission, the Downtown Newton Development Association, the Newton City Council, City Management and City Staff, as well as the private sector.

Summary of Findings

The citizens of Newton are fortunate to have so many existing assets in the downtown area. The downtown business district is anchored by the beautiful and historic 1924 Courthouse, complete with grassy areas and mature trees, which is now the home of the Catawba County Museum of History. Newton is the county seat of Catawba County and has the only true downtown business square in Catawba County.



The downtown business district has one of the best layouts of all the cities in western North Carolina. The City has wide downtown streets, a pedestrian-friendly downtown layout, ample on-street and off-street parking, and many architecturally-interesting historic buildings. Newton already has the basic features that, with the improvements recommended in this report, could make downtown Newton one of the most interesting and desirable downtown areas in Western North Carolina.

The Master Plan Committee feels that Newton might be a crossroad for the future of the downtown area. Plenty of other opportunities exist for the attention of our citizens in nearby communities, and a lack of attention to Newton's downtown area might result in less activity there along with a corresponding deterioration in the downtown environment. On the other hand, the Master Plan Committee believes that a cooperative effort between public and private interests to increase attention and investment in the downtown area will be the spark for creating the vibrant central business district described by the Vision Forum participants.

The Master Plan Committee has observed the streetscape improvements that have been made in other nearby communities and the downtown revitalization that has resulted, and recommends that the City of Newton adopt this Downtown Master Plan as the guideline for revitalizing downtown Newton.

The Master Plan Committee recommends a focus on these improvements:

- 1) The continuation of efforts to relocate overhead utilities underground and to remove other unnecessary clutter from the streetscape such as redundant poles and sign posts
- 2) The adoption of environmentally-responsible and aesthetically pleasing downtown street lighting
- 3) The planting of appropriate street trees, the continuation of the Living Tree Memorial program, the placing of new planters for flowers and other greenery, and the incorporation of environmentally responsible stormwater control areas in the city right-of-way
- 4) The incorporation of "bump-outs" in strategic locations for defining areas and providing additional opportunities for trees and plants
- 5) The addition of brick paver strips along sidewalks and stamped brick-pattern crosswalks
- 6) The incorporation of the City's wayfinding plan into the Downtown Master Plan
- 7) The addition of seating areas, bike racks, and small "pocket parks" in strategic areas to promote pedestrian traffic
- 8) The continuation of the current memorial park bench program with the continued use of the existing bench and trash receptacle design
- 9) The incorporation of dedicated spaces for the display of public art within the city right-of-way

The Master Plan Committee recognizes that implementation of this plan will span several years, and circumstances over time may require modifications and additions to the plan. For that reason, the Master Plan Committee recommends that a Master Plan Review Committee be established to oversee the process of implementation, to review any city-controlled construction plans for adherence to the adopted plan, and to approve future modifications to the plan. The Master Plan Review Committee should have representatives from the DNDA, City planning staff, City Council, and the current Master Plan Committee.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The majority of the Master Plan Committee input was provided by a series of meetings which focused on reviewing current conditions along a street section within the study area. City staff prepared photographs covering the street sections in advance, and the Committee members would walk the street section armed with the photographs and notepads for documenting ideas. At the end of the walk, the Committee met in conference to compare ideas and formulate a list of action items for that street section. Between meetings, staff would document the recommendations of the Committee members by preparing marked drawings or other graphic representations of the ideas, which would be reviewed again by the Committee at the next meeting. These street studies occurred during the spring of 2004 and during the spring and summer of 2009.

The February 2008 Community Vision Forum provided valuable input to the planning process. Statements from the Vision Forum participants indicated that the citizens of Newton want to see a biking and pedestrian-friendly downtown, with a “clean and green” central business area. The feeling from the Vision Forum participants was that improvements in Newton’s streetscape would generate much-needed private investment in improved storefronts and new businesses.

The 2009 Master Plan Committee travelled to Morganton on April 17, 2009. The Committee was fortunate in that Morganton Mayor Cohen, Main Street Director Sharon



Jablonski, and City Planner and Designer Michael Berley all were available to describe Morganton’s downtown streetscape and revitalization efforts. The Morganton trip generated much discussion and many ideas that were incorporated into the Newton Committee’s recommendations. The Committee was particularly impressed by Morganton’s downtown mini-park with water feature and the landscaped alley leading to off-street parking behind the downtown stores.

Considerable technical guidance and advice from past operating experiences was provided by City staff from the Public Works Department and Recreation Department. Sandra Waters from the Recreation Department and Doug Wesson from Public Works were members of both the 2003 Committee and the 2009 Committee.

Fall of 2009 - The Master Plan Committee met to review staff-supplied photos from other cities including Kernersville, Clayton, Statesville, and Brevard, and to view examples of streetscape elements from suppliers' web sites. The Committee also reviewed streetscape and master plans from other cities that were posted on the internet. After all of the city street reconnaissance was reviewed and photographs and catalogs of various design elements were studied, the Master Plan Committee made their final selections and recommendations for the design elements.

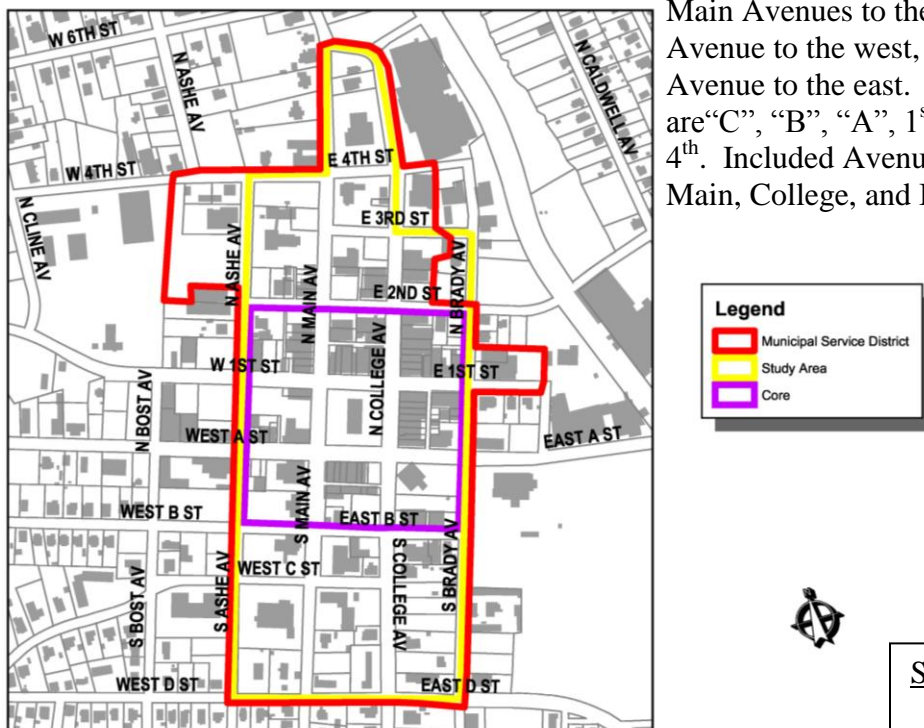
January 2010 - City staff prepared the text and graphics for the final report.

February 2010 - City Staff reviewed the draft Master Plan Report with the DNDA Design Committee and the Master Plan Committee. Comments and suggestions were compiled and incorporated into the Report. A draft report was prepared for presentation to City Council during the Council 2010 Annual Planning Workshop, scheduled for February 18th, 2010. A public forum was held on April 1st, 2010, and input obtained as a result of that forum was used in the final report.

PROJECT SCOPE

The Streetscape Master Plan study area encompasses approximately the same area as the prior Municipal Service District, which is also defined as the Main Street program boundary by the Downtown Newton Development Association. The covered area is bounded by "D" Street/Highway 10 to the south, 5th Street at North College and North

Main Avenues to the north, Ashe Avenue to the west, and Brady Avenue to the east. Included streets are "C", "B", "A", 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Included Avenues are Ashe, Main, College, and Brady.



Study Area Fig. 1-A

(Full size in Appendix)

Main Avenue and College Avenue, Newton's pair of one-way streets, form the primary north-south route through the center of the downtown business district. This corridor contains almost all of the row-type attached commercial buildings in Newton. NC Highway 10 is the primary east-west route through downtown. Since NC 10 is situated on the southern border of the downtown area, it serves as a gateway to the downtown area. The Wayfinding Plan addresses the gateways into downtown Newton as well as downtown signage. By incorporating the Wayfinding Plan into the Master Plan, the NC 10 gateway is addressed and recommendations for downtown signage are defined.

Areas of Concern

Efforts to revitalize downtown Newton will require more than just the implementation of streetscape improvements. Other actions such as support for cultural activities, incentives for private investments in downtown properties, support for downtown activities, and marketing and promotional efforts will be needed. The scope of the Streetscape Master Plan is limited to recommendations for improving the publicly-controlled areas of downtown – namely the streets, sidewalks, public alleys and public parks. The Master Plan Committee recognizes that there is a need for private investment in the downtown area as well, but measures to encourage private property improvements are beyond the scope of this Committee.

The Master Plan Committee views the implementation of streetscape improvements as a major part of adapting downtown Newton to a changing economic situation. It is highly unlikely that the downtown can remain viable as a strictly retail destination. Downtown Newton will need to continue to grow more towards a diverse economy balanced between a residential component, service component, and after-hours entertainment component. As the emphasis of the downtown revitalization efforts change, the Streetscape Master Plan will need to be reviewed and modified. An on-going review process is needed for the Streetscape Master Plan so that the plan can change as the downtown continues to adapt to changing conditions. A re-invented downtown may require that the Master Plan be expanded to incorporate recommendations resulting from future studies of parking, public art, public spaces such as downtown “pocket” parks, lighting, or other infrastructures.

The Master Plan Committee discussed several challenges which must be addressed before significant progress can be made on implementing this Master Plan, the most notable of which would be funding. It will likely take a combination of sources to provide funds for streetscape improvements, maybe including local bond issues, City budget, grants, private contributions, municipal service district tax, loans, and state transportation funds. Other challenges to any implementation plans would be Newton's aging infrastructure, DOT limitations, and the changing economics of Newton's downtown. Implementation plans are not included in this study, but these issues received attention during the Committee's discussions.

The Committee recognizes that many of the streetscape improvements being recommended should be coordinated with repairs to the aging infrastructure. Many of Newton's downtown water and sewer lines are well over 60 years old and are in need of

replacement. It would be unwise to spend money on sidewalk, street, and other surface improvements without considering the possibility that the new surfaces could be marred due to needed repairs to underground pipes. For that reason, implementation plans and financing for streetscape improvements should be coordinated with improvements to the underground infrastructure. The appearance for downtown envisioned by the Committee includes relocating overhead wiring underground, which also dictates that streetscape improvements be coordinated with utility work. Since streetscape improvements are so intertwined with underground wiring, infrastructure improvements, and new requirements such as storm water control measures, planning should occur by the street section for all system needs at once, rather than by the individual system.

Main Avenue and College Avenue are a part of North Carolina Highway 16, and any changes within the right of way are subject to Department of Transportation approval. This could restrict the implementation of some of the ideas recommended by the Committee or at least add steps to the implementation process. Specifically, bump-outs, traffic control or traffic flow changes, and signage will have to meet D.O.T. standards.

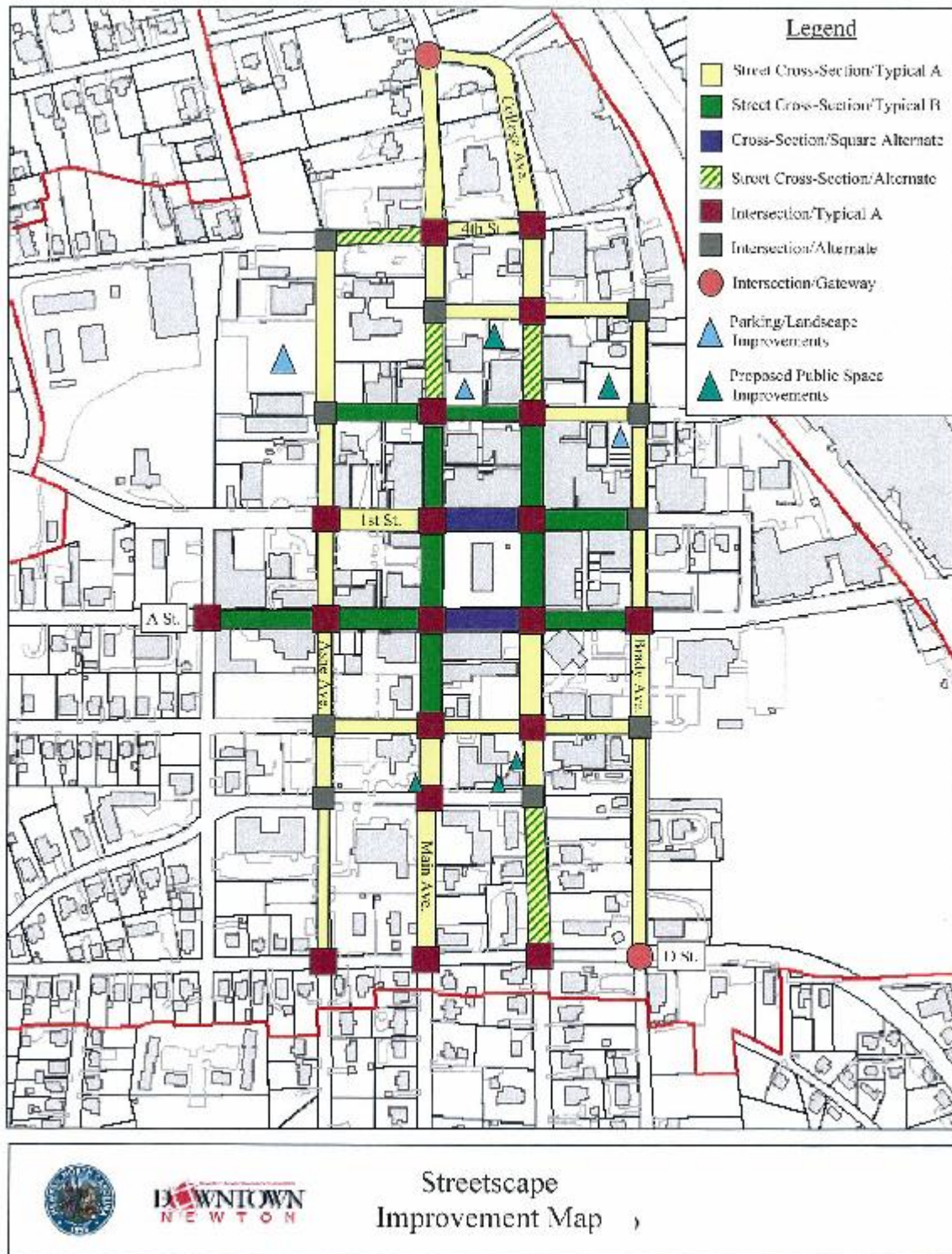
Opportunities

Newton is fortunate in having a defined central business district and “square” with a significant number of early twentieth century store buildings. The City is also fortunate in having a dedicated group of citizens who want to protect our downtown heritage and who want to see the downtown remain a well-kept, interesting, and economically viable area. Community participation in the 2008 Vision Forum and the 2009 Market Study Focus Group discussions was very good. There is a clear desire for downtown revitalization efforts and there is support for City investments in community and economic development. The 2008 Newton Community Survey showed that 86.2% said “yes” or “perhaps” when asked if public funds should be used to enhance downtown.

The need for private investment in downtown Newton is listed as a concern in the preceding section. Many other communities have found that public investment in streetscape improvements have led to increased private investment in downtown buildings. Implementing the recommendations contained in this report might be the spark that Newton needs to start a serious revitalization of downtown buildings and to encourage development of more upper-floor residential units.

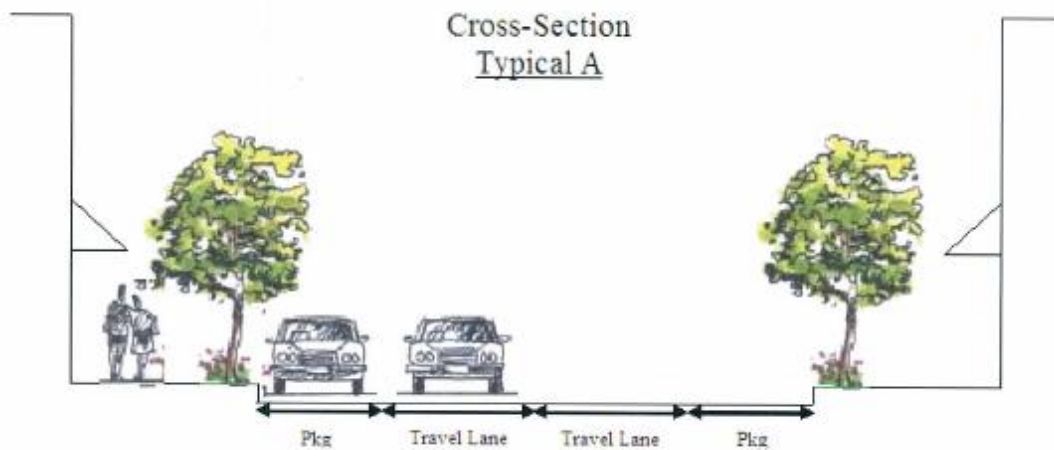
There are a number of plans for redevelopment and improvement within Newton that could interface with the Streetscape Master Plan to enhance the total economic development contribution of all efforts. The Newton City staff is working on a greenway plan and a storm water control plan for the City. Both of these plans have the potential to add green spaces and pedestrian improvements within the City and should be coordinated with the Streetscape Master Plan. The City is also working on a Core Area Plan for addressing growth and land development issues over the next 10 years for the 2,000 acres in the middle part of the city. The Core Area Plan will deal with issues such as infill development, adaptive re-use and re-development. Any plans for improving the “gateways” into downtown Newton, such as A Street and Highway 10/ D Street, should be coordinated with the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan.

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT MAP

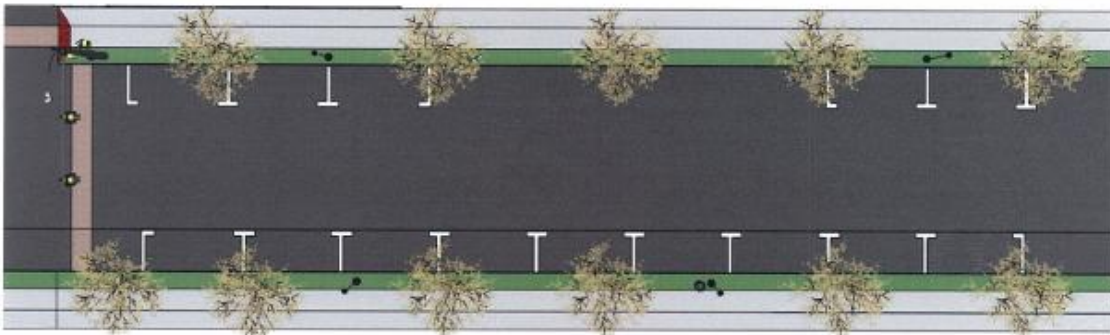


CONCEPTUAL CROSS –SECTIONS AND DETAILS

These drawings are to be considered as typical representations of the streetscape appearance that the Master Plan Committee recommends for downtown Newton. These are not final construction drawings and are not meant to be dimensionally correct nor all inclusive. Enough drawings have been included to define most of the major features that the Master Plan Committee envisions for downtown Newton.



Typical A Plan View

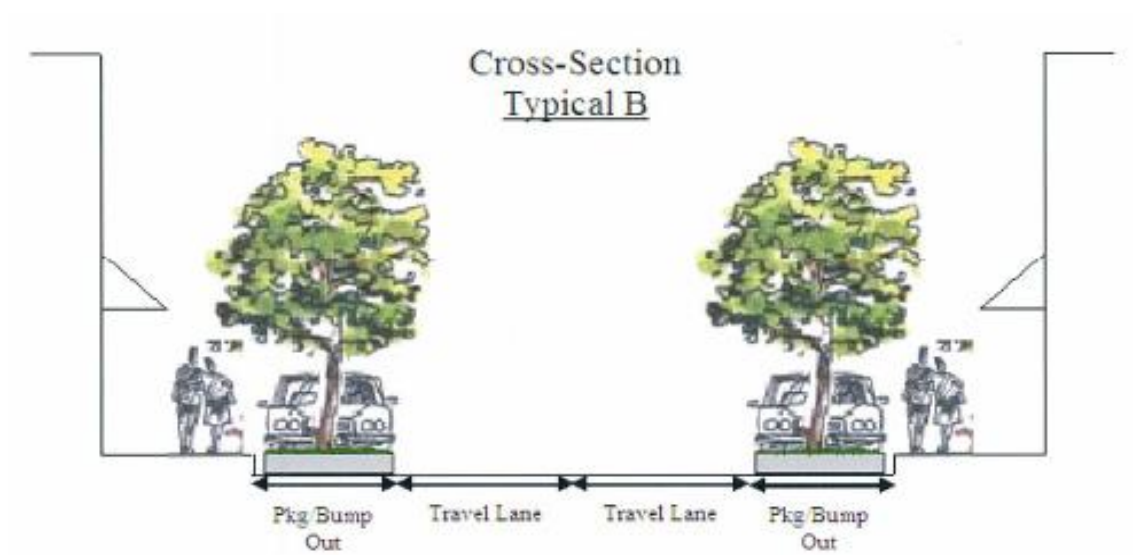


Typical A

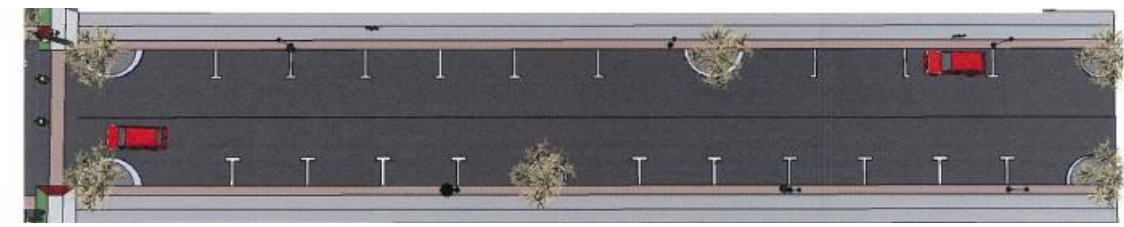
Before



After



Typical B
Plan View



Typical B

Before



After



Intersection Typical



PLAN ELEMENTS

Sidewalks, Bump-Outs and Crosswalks

Bump-outs will be added at strategic locations in the downtown area to provide a more pedestrian- friendly downtown layout, to permit the addition of small street trees, to delineate parking and traffic spaces from pedestrian areas, and to encourage drivers to slow down when navigating areas with more pedestrian traffic. Bump-outs will require new curbing and will be surfaced with brick pavers.



The addition of bump-outs will eliminate a few on-street parking spaces. Since a perceived shortage of downtown parking has surfaced in some discussions and surveys concerning the downtown area, the City Planning Department conducted an analysis of downtown parking. That analysis indicates that downtown parking availability is adequate. There are approximately 305 free, on-street parking spaces in the Central

Business District, another 85 leased spaces in the District, and over 900 privately owned parking spaces in the Central Business District that are reserved for patrons of a specific business. The parking report is included in the Appendix.



In the central business district, a strip of the existing concrete sidewalk next to the curb will be removed and replaced with brick pavers. In areas within the downtown area where the sidewalk must be completely replaced, a combination of brick pavers and concrete would be used for the new sidewalk. Brick pavers would be used over underground utilities to provide easier access as long as the resulting pattern is aesthetically pleasing. This herringbone

pattern of red and gray pavers is recommended as an example of the preferred appearance for the sidewalk borders.



Brick pavers will also be incorporated as part of any storm water management basins that are designed for the downtown area.

Image courtesy of GreenWorks, P.C.

Photos show stormwater planters for treatment and infiltration of stormwater from adjacent street and sidewalk paving.

Crosswalks throughout the streetscape planning area will be stamped in a brick paver pattern using an overlay process. The effect will be as pleasing as a real brick paver crosswalk without the cost of removing pavement and without the ongoing maintenance associated with using brick pavers on a high-traffic street. Brick pavers do not perform as well as stamped pavement under heavier traffic loads. This photograph of a running bond crosswalk pattern is preferred by the Master Plan Committee.



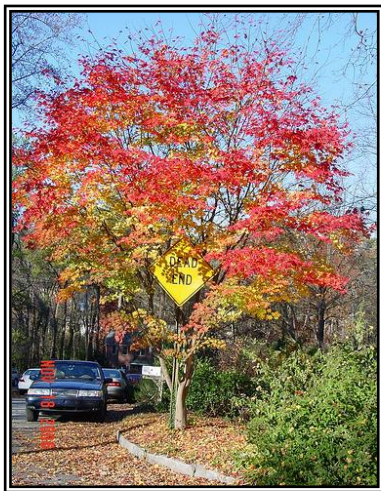
Street Trees

Street trees are an important element of the atmosphere that the Master Plan Committee is recommending for downtown Newton. Photographs from and visits to nearby communities have demonstrated the aesthetic and climate regulating contributions of street trees. A review of the current downtown area pointed out that the City is already blessed with a number of beautiful, mature trees. The Master Plan Committee recommends the addition of more trees in appropriate locations, with careful consideration for placing the correct species in the correct location. Bump-outs around the square can be good locations to add a limited number of street trees. The Committee recognizes that trees can become a nuisance to City maintenance efforts, downtown business owners, and downtown patrons when too many trees are used or the wrong kind of tree is selected for a given location. Berries, sap drippings, and roots can present problems in a downtown environment. And, street trees need to be chosen and located with the street lighting plan in mind to avoid blocking the street lights.



The Master Plan Committee has prepared a “preferred list” of recommended street trees. The Master Plan Committee also recommends that the on-going Master Plan Review Committee approve future detailed plans for tree plantings, taking into consideration past experience and changing downtown conditions. The installation of street trees should become a part of the City’s existing Living Tree Memorial program.

PREFERRED LIST OF STREET TREES



Japanese Maple



Service Berry



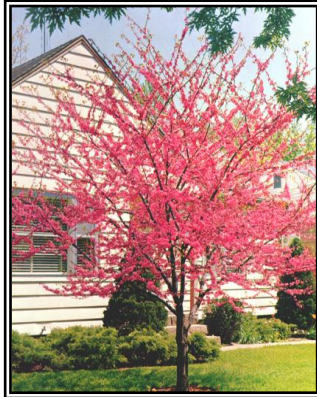
Lacebark Elm

PREFERRED LIST OF STREET TREES

CONTINUED



Heritage Birch



Eastern Redbud



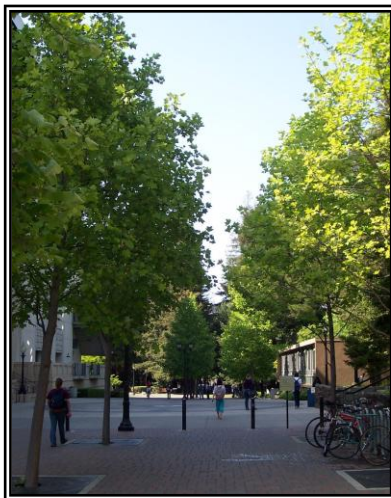
Snowbell



Dogwood



Duraheat Birch

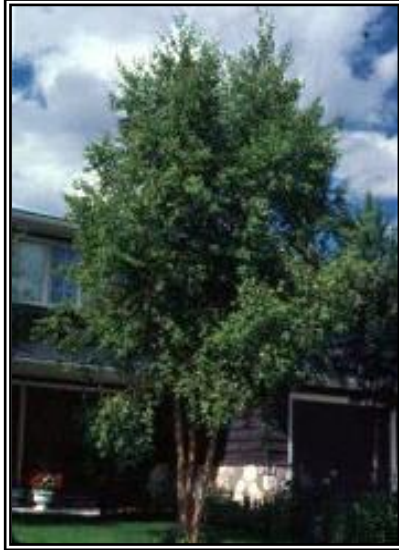


Tulip Poplar

PREFERRED LIST OF STREET TREES

Crepe Myrtle

CONTINUED



River Birch

Columnar Maple

Sweet Gum

Planter Boxes



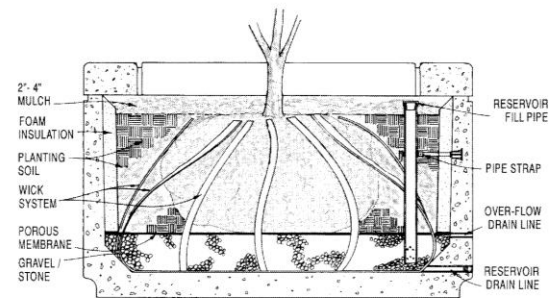
The Master Plan Committee believes that the current concrete planters are too large for the available space. They are too imposing in front of most of the businesses and are in the way of opening car doors and sidewalk pedestrian traffic.

The Master Plan Committee recommends replacing the current concrete planters with a combination of smaller planters and in-ground plantings located in bump-outs and in the brick paver sidewalk borders.

Existing Newton Planter Boxes



The Committee recommends replacing the current concrete planter boxes with smaller planters that are designed with internal water wells. The smaller planter boxes are good alternatives to street trees around the Square, where the tall row buildings use up the space needed for trees.



PLANTER RESERVOIR SYSTEM

A reservoir planter helps conserve water and reduce maintenance while nurturing healthy plantings. A hidden fill pipe directs water to the roots and fabric wicks and insulation provide continuous moisture while reducing evaporation. Drain lines eliminate over-watering.



In-ground plantings and plant containers can be coordinated with street tree locations. The planter boxes and trees need to be located so that they do not interfere with business access or with opening car doors from parked cars. The Master Plan Committee recommends that the design of the planter containers be unique but coordinated with the style of the other streetscape elements. A style that reflects on the



heritage of Catawba Valley potters would be preferred.

Street Lights

The Master Plan Committee dedicated a considerable amount of discussion to the choice of street light styles. Street lighting plays a major part in the daytime and nighttime appearance of the City. The intent of the Master Plan Committee is not to select a particular manufacturer or model of street light at this time, but the goal is to select a general style of light fixture. Due to the technical nature of street lighting, the increasing interest in “light pollution” and “night-sky protection”, and changing energy and environmental conditions, Committee decided to leave the specification of a manufacturer and model to the engineering phase of the Streetscape Project.

Another issue considered by the Master Plan Committee is the historic significance of and the community involvement in the installation of the current decorative “globe” type street lights around the Square. The Master Plan Committee discussed whether future street lighting should match the current fixtures, complement but differ from the current fixture style, or whether the current fixtures should be replaced with a completely different style. The Committee recognizes that the “globe” style fixtures contribute to the special historic identity of the “Courthouse Square” and recommends that these fixtures remain. The fixture manufacturer advises that the current globe fixtures cannot be made as energy-efficient as the newer LED lighting now available. Therefore, the Master Plan Committee recommends that “lantern” style lighting fixtures that complement the existing fixtures on the 1924 Courthouse be used in the remainder of the Master Plan area. Lantern-style fixtures are designed to direct the light downward and can be outfitted with energy-efficient LED lamps. This recommendation is intended to protect and celebrate the special characteristics of the Courthouse Square while taking into account the latest technology in energy-efficient street lighting. The use of lantern-style lighting is already evident on other historic downtown buildings such as the Old Post Office, First United Methodist Church, and Beth Eden Lutheran Church.



Newton “Globe”
Decorative
Street Light

The existing globe street lights and future lantern street lights can also be made to complement each other through the choice of poles and arms styles. The Master Plan Committee recommends that future street light poles be selected that are of the same style

as the current decorative poles around the square. High-level, overhead light likewise would utilize the same pole style.

EXAMPLES OF LANTERN STYLE FIXTURES



1924 Courthouse
Light Fixture





Wayfinding and Street Name Signs

While the current Master Plan Committee was completing work on the streetscape plan, the Newton Planning Department was working on a Wayfinding Plan for the City. Recognizing that the major emphasis of the Wayfinding Plan was either for the downtown area or the gateways to the downtown area, City staff decided that the Wayfinding Plan should become a part of the Streetscape Master Plan. In addition, the number of

downtown signs and the visual attractiveness of those signs is a key contributor to the overall appearance of downtown Newton. Easy-to-follow directional signage would be a benefit to our downtown businesses and to all downtown Newton visitors.

Publicly-funded signage can not be used to identify individual downtown businesses, but should clearly point out the direction to the center of the downtown business district and to major public destinations such as the Catawba County Historical Museum, City Hall, the Post Office, and public parking lots, for example. A few examples of wayfinding signage follow.



After several work sessions with the City's Planning Commission, feedback from the Downtown Newton Development Association, and a Community Visioning Forum held by the Downtown Main Street Program organizers, the following list of signage goals has been generated:

- ✓ To enhance motorist's ability to locate downtown area.

- ✓ To promote and enhance a distinct identity for Downtown Newton.
- ✓ To provide an attractive first impression for visitors.
- ✓ To provide effective signage to specific destinations within the district.

In order to enhance the district's identity, the Wayfinding Plan calls for multiple complementary design elements to be employed. At the district edge, Gateway signs will be erected to help motorists identify that they have entered the downtown area. Banners will also be placed to strengthen the district identity; setting it apart from the surrounding neighborhoods. Finally, destination-specific directional signs will be placed within downtown streets to help motorists find popular points of interest, as well as provide reference points to assist in finding private business located downtown.

Gateway signs are placed at the edge of a defined district to separate and identify that particular area from its surroundings. Sign vocabulary clearly identifies the name of the district and sometimes contains welcome greetings, general service language, or the logos of local civic organizations. Several examples for Gateway signs are shown below. The city currently has a number of gateway signs entering the city (see below) and similarly designed signs for its parks. It is recommended that Newton's Downtown Gateway signs and City Park signs are consistent in design.



Existing Newton Gateway Sign



Destination specific directional signs provide motorists and pedestrians important information when looking for locations within the district. Not only do they direct visitors to destinations listed on the sign, but they also provide landmarks to follow when searching for lesser known attractions between advertised destinations.



These destination specific directional signs should have a frame style that is consistent with the other elements of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. The suggested frame style would be something similar to the historic markers used in downtown Newton.



The second sign element in the Wayfinding Plan is the use of banners. Banners are a simple way to promote Downtown Newton's unique identity. The City Parks and Recreation Department already rotates several banners throughout the year on existing poles around the Courthouse Square.



A well designed banner specifically identifying Downtown Newton will strengthen civic pride.

The Wayfinding Plan identifies nine destinations to be a part of the directional sign element in the plan. Figure 2-A identifies and maps these specific locations.

Fig.2-A List of Downtown wayfinding destinations:

1. City Hall/Police Department	6. Newton Rec. Center/ Pool
2. Catawba County Historical Museum	7. Newton-Conover Auditorium
3. The Green Room/ Old Post Office Playhouse	8. City-Owned Parking Lot
4. Public Library	9. The Newton Depot
5. Post Office	



0.25 Miles

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Street Name Signs

The Master Plan Committee recommends that street name signs be added to the overhead traffic control arms to reduce clutter and the number of street sign poles at ground level.



Photograph from Salisbury NC



If approved by D.O.T, street names signs are to be white letters on black or blue background with a special style which denotes “downtown”.



Benches, Bike Racks and Trash Receptacles

The Master Plan Committee recommends that the current metal benches and trash receptacles continue to be used for downtown streetscape improvements. City Staff informed the Committee that the bench design was



developed specifically for Newton and the benches are manufactured locally. The



Committee's opinion is that the styling of the current benches and trash receptacles is attractive and practical and there is no need to change. The Master Plan Committee would like

to see the City's bench dedication program continued as well.

The Committee recommends adding tables and benches to the 1924 Courthouse site with additional hard surfaced, landscaped areas. Specific locations for benches, and bike racks were not identified as a part of this study. The Committee felt that those locations should be studied as a part of the future detailed design process.

Bicycle Racks

The Committee sees the possibility of combining the practical need for bicycle racks with the opportunity to add public art to downtown Newton, and recommends investigating a unique design for downtown Newton bicycle racks. Some locations will be more suitable for conventional bicycle racks, such as bollards, and other locations might be prime locations for custom-designed bicycle racks.



Ballard, WA Custom-Designed
Bicycle Rack
By Carl Sanden



Louisville, KY Custom-Designed
Bicycle Rack
By David Bibelhauser
bikehauser.com

The Master Plan Committee recommends using special bicycle racks incorporating public art around the square for special interest. Standard bicycle bollards such as the example below can be used in less conspicuous areas.



Public Art

The Master Plan Committee recommends that public art be incorporated into future downtown streetscape plans. The Committee discussed various opportunities for adding such public art as murals painted on building walls, sculptures,



Red Wolf Metal Sculpture
Brevard NC

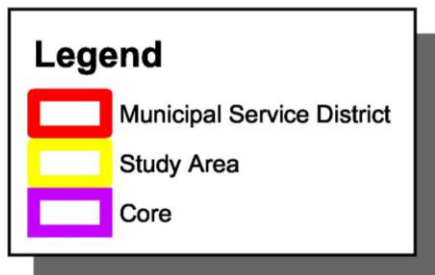
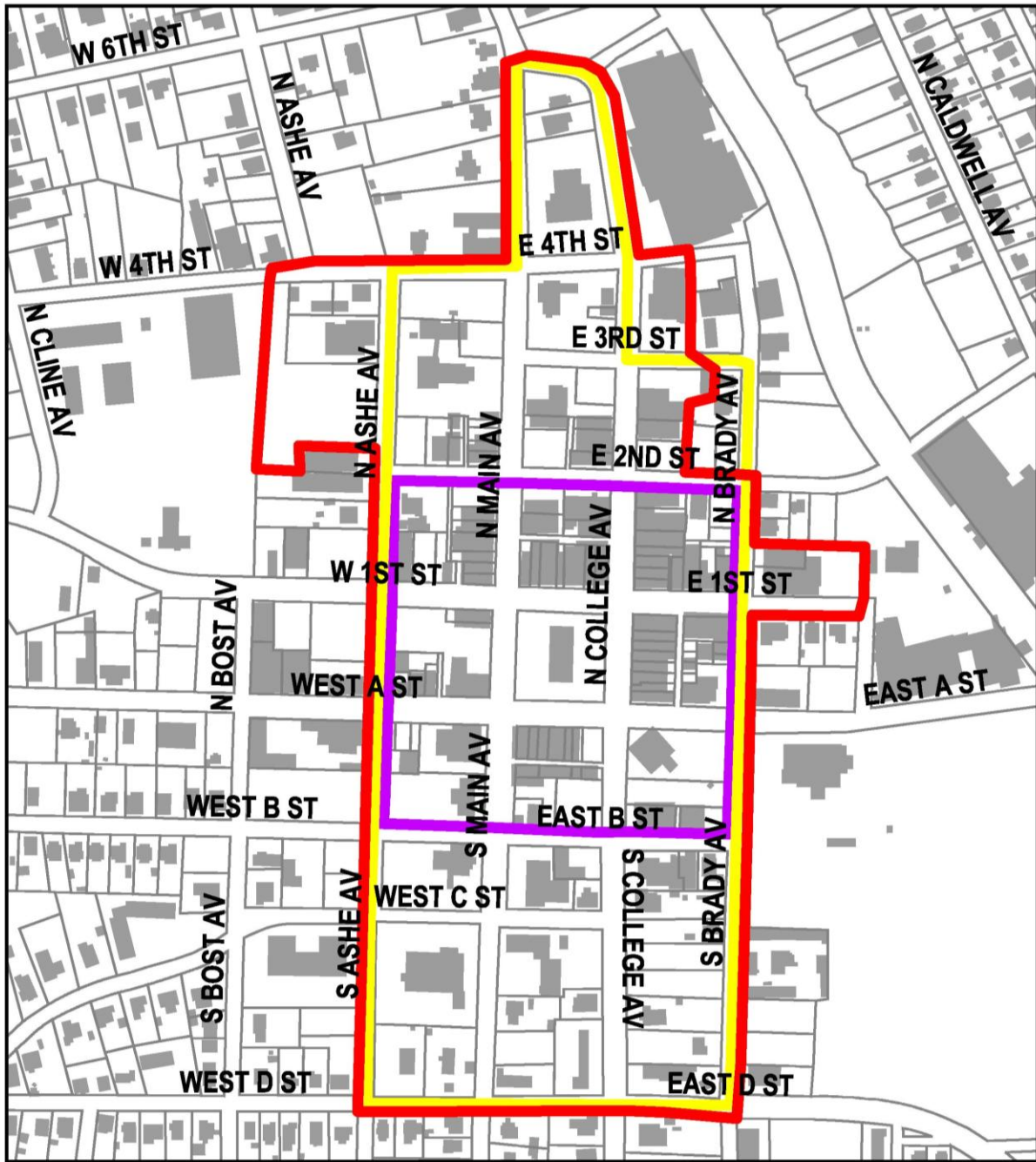
and art-oriented custom downtown streetscape elements such as bike racks or information kiosks. Other North Carolina cities have incorporated public art into their streetscapes. Many communities have downtown murals with a historic theme, Brevard has metal wildlife sculptures, and Wilmington has a public art program where they regularly change their downtown art sculptures to showcase a different artist's work for a six-month period. Downtown public art of almost any kind can create an identity for a downtown and can be an important economic development tool.

The Master Plan Committee has not recommended a specific public art type or theme. That must be the subject for a more intensive study of Newton's branding, identity, history, and interests. The Committee does recommend that public and private interests cooperate to identify a public art theme for Newton, possibly coordinated by the Appearance Commission and/or the Downtown Newton Development Association. The Committee suggests searching for an arts grant to fund the development and implementation of public art in downtown Newton.



Pocket Park and Sculpture
Kernersville NC

APPENDIX A. Study Area Map Fig. 1-A



NEWTON STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS



SIDEWALK BORDER PATTERN



CROSSWALK PATTERN



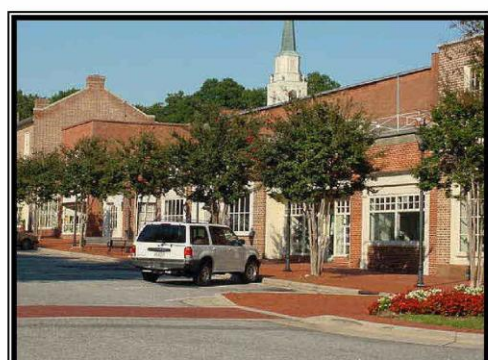
TYPICAL BUMPOUT WITH PLANTS



TYPICAL BUMPOUT WITH PLANTS



TYPICAL BUMPOUT WITH PAVERS



BUMPOUT AND CROSSWALK

NEWTON STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS



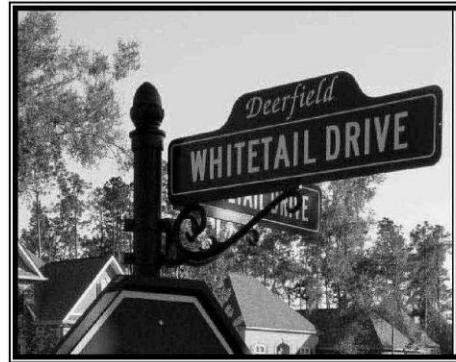
LANTERN STYLE LIGHT FIXTURE



LANTERN STYLE STREET LIGHTS



STREET NAME SIGN COLOR



STREET NAME SIGN - DOWNTOWN



WAYFINDING SIGN—DESTINATION



WAYFINDING SIGN -DIRECTONS

NEWTON STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS



TYPICAL BICYCLE RACK



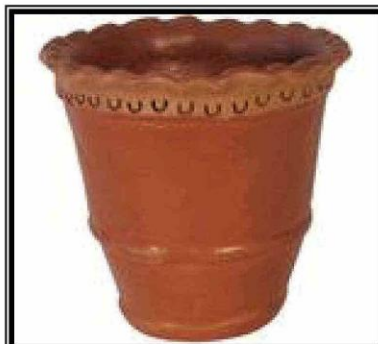
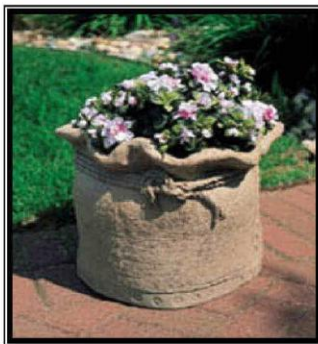
CUSTOM ART BICYCLE RACK



CURRENT BENCH



CURRENT TRASH RECEPTACLE



POSSIBLE PLANTER STYLES

APPENDIX C. Downtown Parking Study

Staff Report – Downtown Residential Parking

May 7, 2009

Prepared By: Ben McCrary, Planner

This report aims at providing some statistical background and analysis concerning the state of both on-street and off-street parking afforded to downtown visitors, merchants, employees and residents. The latter section of this report goes on to describe mechanisms used elsewhere to address long-term parking solutions for individuals who reside within the downtown.

On-Street Parking

- ✓ 305 on-street parking spaces provided within the B-3, Central Business District
- ✓ 10 of those spaces are reserved for Handicapped use
- ✓ Parking is Free (24/7)
- ✓ 2 Hr. time limit (during weekdays, 6am to 6pm) (enforcement schedule varies)
- ✓ No time restriction overnight or on weekends

Off-Street Parking (City maintained lots)

- ✓ 85 leased spaces (includes Blue, Green, Orange, Red and Yellow lots)
- ✓ 72 open spaces (remainder of Old A&P lot, excluding Orange lot leased spaces)
- ✓ Permit required to park in leased spaces on weekdays, 6am to 6pm (enforcement schedule varies)
- ✓ Permit not required for overnight/weekend parking

Off-Street Parking (Privately maintained)

- ✓ 35 Private lots
- ✓ 900+ spaces
- ✓ 1 lot privately leased
- ✓ Remainder of spaces are adjacent to business location and signed to indicate parking is reserved for use by private business patrons

As indicated above, there are approximately **1,400 spaces in the 26 block area** of the Downtown Central Business District. The longest distance across the downtown is .4 miles (approx. 2300 ft.). An average person could walk that distance at a leisurely pace in about 7-8 minutes. However, there are an adequate number of spaces where most people can find a space within two blocks of their destination. Two blocks is the equivalent of about 750 feet; or a 2-3 minute walk.

Downtown Residential Parking

There are currently eight (8) residential units located within the CBD (Central Business District). Existing building stock holds the capacity for an additional 30-40 more residential units. Below you will find a list of ways surrounding communities, and other similarly sized downtowns, address the challenge of providing downtown parking that meets stakeholders' needs.

- ✓ **Hickory** – The City of Hickory provides four types of parking:
 1. Off-street parking, free of charge and free of time restrictions
 2. Off-street parking, free of charge, time limited to 2 hr.
 3. On-street is provided free and is monitored for time during usual business hours
 4. Monthly leased spaces

Planner, Dave Leonetti stated that these three types of parking have sufficiently handled the parking needs of their downtown district. He also said there have not been any requests from downtown residents to consider parking solutions specific to residents nor does the City of Hickory require parking for new residential development in the downtown.

- ✓ **Conover** – The City of Conover provides two types of parking:
 1. On-street parking, free of charge, time limited to 2 hr.
 2. Off-street parking, free of charge and free of time restrictions

Planner, Lance Height indicated that Downtown Conover has an abundance of parking and that on average the off-street lots are 80-90% vacant.

- ✓ **Morganton** – Morganton provides both on and off street parking free of charge for varied time limits, ranging from 10 minutes to All Day, depending on the location to high demand areas. They also lease a small number of spaces to downtown merchants.

APPENDIX D. Photo Credits

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Pages 20 and 34 – Bonnet Flower Planter – Wausau Tile

Page 22 – Various Lantern Street Light Fixtures – Sternberg Lighting

Page 29 – Spiral Custom Bicycle Rack – Carl Sanden

Pages 29 and 34 – Face Custom Bicycle Rack – David Bibelhauser

Pages 30 and 34 – Bollard Bicycle Rack – The Park Catalog